

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

THE LOOKOUT FOR BOOTH'S THEATRE.

The important announcement was made on the 25th inst. that Booth's Theatre had been leased to Mr. John Stetson, of Boston—the manager of the Globe Theatre, in that city—and the public was informed that Mr. Stetson would open it about the 1st of September. Booth's is one of the finest theatres in the United States, and, while Edwin Booth was its manager, its affairs were administered in a spirit of allegiance to the highest standard of taste. Furthermore, it was successful; and Mr. Booth would never have been constrained to relinquish it had he possessed the talent for managing financial business. It is not true—although it is often stated—that Booth's Theatre, as conducted by Edwin Booth, was a failure, or account either of Shakespeare or a high moral and intellectual tone. On the contrary, its receipts were enormous. But the theatre cost more than a million dollars, whereas it ought not to have cost a third of that sum; Mr. Booth could not keep accounts and act at the same time; and he was unfortunate in his partners, and hence his retirement. That retirement was, in a public point of view, deplorable. Such a man as Edwin Booth at the head of a theatre is a guarantee of its beneficial influence.

Booth's Theatre was opened on February 3, 1860, and Edwin Booth left it in June of 1873—his bankruptcy being declared in February, 1874. Since then it has had many managers, and no policy of guidance. Each successive speculator has developed the same idea—the idea, namely, that he was too good to make some money, and was willing to do anything in the world, even to the extent of turning himself inside out, to accomplish his purpose. One by one, accordingly, each speculator has dropped off. It is not wrong for any man to endeavor to prosper in business; but this sort of endeavor does not make any man an object of delight to his fellow-creatures. There can be no such thing as enthusiasm about the keeper of a grocery store. Theatrical management involves the use and direction of some of the highest and most intelligent forces of the world, and a manager who would really succeed must, at least, impress his contemporaries with the idea that he understands and respects his intellectual responsibilities, and is possessed of "a soul above hunting." If he has no ambition beyond "the peaceful pursuit of mirth," he cannot wonder that even the older theatres view him with indifference.

The tendency, for a considerable time, in this department of life, in this region, has been toward small and low views and persons. Men of the like Fisk stripe, successful gamblers and the like, have gone into theatrical management, and it has turned out to be a mighty exploit, and something quite grand and remarkable, for each inglorious to keep half-a-dozen balloons of enterprise floating at once. No one of them, in the meanwhile, has done any good thing for the stage or the public. Their record is absolutely barren. Mr. John Stetson, who now comes to Booth's Theatre, formerly managed a variety show in Boston, but more recently has got possession of the Globe Theatre, in that city, and has been speculating in Salvini and other legitimate attractions; but there is nothing in Mr. Stetson's antecedents, or in what I know of Mr. Stetson's mental requirements and tastes, to encourage a rosy anticipation with regard to his projects in theatrical management here. His late ventures, indeed, have indicated a perception of good things, and possibly he may conduct Booth's Theatre as something higher and better than a circus; if so, his efforts will be recognized with respect, sympathy and support. He has afforded some amusement, to begin with, by promulgating his views on the proceedings of some of his predecessors in this theatre, and stating what he designs to do. "I shall play Booth if he comes back," says Mr. Stetson—seemingly aware that Booth may possibly object to the association, or to being "played" by a manager from the provinces whose record is yet to be achieved. "Mr. Booth," adds Mr. Stetson, becoming historic, "tried to make it a Shakespearean theatre the year round. He failed because the people may go to see Shakespeare played perhaps three months a year, but they want to see good things, and amusements have changed wonderfully in recent years."

In a word, Stetson, who is probably surprised at this glib phrase, if ever he should learn anything about the subject, to know that in the first year of Booth's management, after "Romeo and Juliet" and "Othello" had filled less than four months, the plays produced were not Shakespeare at all, but "The White Queen," "Rip Van Winkle," with Jefferson, "Leah" and "Matteo Warner" with Mrs. May Morris; and "Guy Mannering" with Mrs. Wallack as "Meyerbeer"; and, furthermore, that most of Booth's season was filled up with the engagements of John S. Clarke, J. H. McVicker and Joseph Jefferson. Mr. Stetson, however, is new in this groove, and requires a little time for learning the ropes.

"With good 'advertisements' he may do much—and we cordially hope he will distinguish himself by achievements more momentous than 'taking down the picture over the proscenium arch.'

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC NOTES.

The season ended at the Park Theatre last night, at the end of the 25th.

"All the Rage" was acted last night, for the last time at the Park.

The Vokes Family has ended its engagement at the Union Square Theatre, and the theatre is closed. Miss Alice Harrison is this week, in Philadelphia, where her season will be brought to a close.

"All the Rage" will be transferred, tomorrow night, from Daly's Theatre to Noho.

Harcourt's Theatre in Brooklyn is closed—the season having closed last night.

"Belle Taylor" passed its tenth consecutive performance at the Standard Theatre on the 27th of May—last Friday.

The charming opera of "La Mascotte" may still be heard at the Union Theatre, where it is to continue to the end of the month.

Mr. M. B. Curtis continues to act at Harcourt's Theatre, as "Sailor of Love," a comical tragedian.

The action is large.

Mr. Mars L. Barrett, the Bartone, is engaged to sing the part of "Ferdinand" in the comic opera of "Our Girl" at the Union Theatre, where it is to continue to the end of the month.

"Dame Judith," who has been seen at the Union Avenue Theatre, will be continued there by the Vokes Company.

Musical entertainments, conducted by Mr. Russell Hall, may be expected every evening at the Metropolitan Concert Hall. This is the favorite summer entertainment and resort.

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